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## THE CAMPAIGN OF 1876 IN INDIANA

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THE purpose of this paper is to give a better understanding of the political situation in Indiana in 1876, and of the spirit that produced it, than can be obtained from the books that treat the period in a more general way, and from a National rather than from a local standpoint. The sources from which this study was made are the leading Indiana newspapers of that year, though reference has been made only to the Indianapolis papers, campaign speeches and party platforms.

Since the heavy Democratic gains in the State election of 1872 it had become evident that Indiana was to be a battleground in the campaign of 1876.<sup>1</sup> An editorial in the *Indianapolis Journal* of February 22, 1876, declared that Indiana could be carried by the Republicans only on condition that they nominate the strongest possible ticket and stand true to their traditions. It also predicted that Indiana would be the battleground for the coming National campaign. The Democrats were buoyant over their success in 1872 and were anticipating the campaign with confident expectations of victory. Both the *Indianapolis Journal* and the *Indianapolis Sentinel* expressed the opinion that the result of the Indiana State election in October, 1876, would be an important factor in determining the results of the National election the following November.

The Republican organization in the State was not by any means perfect. The oppressive Reconstruction policy of the party was beginning to show its effects in a wide-spread discontent, and the general prevalence of corruption in office for which the party was perhaps not as much responsible as the demoralization wrought by the years of warfare, was influential in increasing the discontent. So the Republican party was facing a real problem at the beginning of the campaign.

Its chief organ was the *Indianapolis Journal*. In an editorial on New Year's day it declared its policy to be to represent the interests of society in the city and State and to support the Republican party. It also declared its intention of giving friend and foe a fair hearing. However fair it was in giving "hearings" to foes, it was

<sup>1</sup> They had elected the Governor and increased their numbers in the Legislature.

sometimes far from fair in making reports of them. I think it is safe to assume that the voice of the *Journal* was the voice of the Republican organization in Indiana at this time, inasmuch as the editor was chairman of the State convention of that year and succeeded in voicing all his policies into the State platform which the convention adopted.

At the beginning of the campaign the money question was pre-dominant Nationally within the Republican party. The party was divided on this subject and the division was chiefly sectional. Generally speaking, the eastern Republicans desired a speedy return to resumption of specie payments and the western Republicans desired slower movements in the same direction. Of course Indiana was with the latter faction. The act providing for the resumption of specie payment on January 1, 1879, had already been passed by Congress much to the satisfaction of the easterners and equally to the disgust of those in the West. In an editorial of January 1, 1876, the *Journal* denounced the Resumption Act because it was impossible to be carried out and because it was injurious to business. It insisted that the healing and strengthening of time was absolutely necessary to resumption and that no one could predict very far ahead when the country would be ready to resume specie payment without serious injury to business. It therefore demanded the immediate repeal of the Resumption Act. The sweeping nature of this demand was tempered from time to time as the campaign progressed, but it never became less exacting than to demand the repeal of that part of the act which provided a definite time for resumption.<sup>2</sup> As to the greenbacks and bank notes, it insisted that they had both been created by the Republicans to meet special needs and that they had served and were still serving their purpose. Any immediate disturbance of either one was denounced, but just exactly what was to be the ultimate disposition of them was evidently not perfectly clear in the minds of the party leaders. At least it was not clearly expressed. Perhaps their unspoken policy was to let time determine what it might be necessary to do.

As to money basis the party spoke out, through an editorial in the Indianapolis *Journal* February 1, 1876, in an unmistakable way. The ultimate redemption, on demand, in gold or silver of all government currency, and bank notes secured by deposits in the United States Treasury, or United States bonds, was their unchanging policy on the money question.

<sup>2</sup> Republican State Platform of 1876.

As to education the party was inclined to be reactionary. It would not abolish free schools, but it would put a limit and a check on the tendency to make public education more inclusive. The *Indianapolis Journal* of March 28, 1876, in an editorial has the following to say on the subject: "It is hardly to be supposed that the founders of the system ever imagined that the time would come when the dead languages and higher sciences would be taught in these schools and that academies and seminaries would be virtually superseded by them. This has come to pass, however, and in this city students can prepare for college without going outside the graded schools. This is thought by some to be the crowning glory of the system, that it is laying its hands upon every branch of learning and introducing to students the mysteries of all knowledge. There can be no question that this is beyond the original plan and purpose of the system. It was established to furnish the people with a simple, practical education in English. It was no part of the original design that foreign languages, living or dead, or the higher mathematics should have any place in the curriculum of the common schools, and still less, if possible, was it intended to embrace the fine arts. . . . It has grown from a common school into a faint image of a common university. . . . It is not hard to see in all this a great danger to the system." This quotation pretty well expressed the popular feeling concerning higher education at public expense. It was not voiced in politics especially, but was common to both Democrats and Republicans. There seemed to be a general feeling that higher education was needed only by a very small per cent. of people, and that in a great many cases it tended to disqualify rather than to fit one for the duties of life.

The methods employed by the party in advancing its interests were reprehensible. There was little trace of either scruple or moderation by the papers. They resorted regularly to the most scathing and abusive language. "Hypocrite," "swindler," "perjurer," "liar," "thief," "villain," and such words were used in profusion against opponents, and no man daring to enter politics was considered too good to receive a bountiful apportionment. Things were printed as statistics that were concoctions pure and simple. The opponent was not only said to be wholly in the wrong, but was knowingly so, and always for the express purpose of injuring the State or society. Reason was pushed aside and passion was appealed to. Of

course there was nothing gained by this, but on the other hand, there was little lost by it, for all parties were much the same in this respect.

The Independent Greenback party at this time was rapidly gaining in numbers and its recruits were chiefly from the Republican ranks. The Indianapolis *Journal* repeatedly complained of this condition and the Indianapolis *Sentinel* exulted in it and gave it as the chief basis for their expected increased majority at the coming election, an expectation that proved to be well founded. So it may be taken as a safe assertion that in 1876 the Greenback gains usually meant Republican losses. This was due to the wide-spread general discontent with the Grant administration and with the Republican financial policy.

The Republican State convention met at Indianapolis on February 22. It was perhaps the largest that had ever convened in the State up to that time. Hon. E. B. Martindale, editor of the Indianapolis *Journal*, was made permanent chairman. In his address to the convention he reviewed the record of his party since it had come into power and declared it to be unparalleled in history.<sup>3</sup> He declared that a strong ticket could be selected, and he admonished the convention to harmonious action. He denounced inflation and advocated the eventual return to resumption of specie payment, but demanded the repeal of the Resumption Act on the grounds that it was impractical. He declared that the Democrats were Confederate at heart and were seeking to undo the work of the war.

At the close of his address he called for the report of the Committee on Resolutions, which submitted a report as follows (condensed): (1) For Republican principles and traditions, for election reform, and for the vindication of popular representation; (2) against State impediment to National laws; (3) against the right of secession; (4) for independence of both State and Nation when acting in its own proper circles; (5) to forgive the Confederates who desired to be forgiven, but not to put them on an equality with those who had remained loyal, declaring flatly that the North had been right in the War and that the South had been wrong; (6) against the removal of Union soldiers to make room for ex-Confederates; (7) qualification for civil office on basis of their preparation for the place, their moral integrity and loyalty to the Nation; (8) equal rights for all and special privileges for none; (9) separation of church and State; (10) revenue so to be adjusted as to secure en-

<sup>3</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, February 3, 1876.

couragement of home industry and harmony between labor and capital; (11) the lightest revenue should be levied on necessities and the heaviest revenues on luxuries; (12) for the ultimate resumption of specie payment, but the repeal of that part of the Resumption Act fixing a definite date for the beginning of resumption; (13) for the preservation of greenbacks to meet present currency needs; (14) it declared that our credit had been bad and revenue insufficient in 1861, and that in 1876 our credit was good and the revenue adequate; (15) against payment of any part of the Confederate debt or remuneration of Confederates for any property loss caused by the war; (16) for public economy; (17) common education to be fostered by the State, but not higher education; (18) for letting the will of the majority be law; (19) for providing for the soldier, his widow, and his orphan; (20) President Grant was commended; (21) Oliver P. Morton was endorsed for President of the United States.

The report was unanimously accepted and strong enthusiasm was manifested. The working of the convention from the first gave evidence of a well-oiled machine. The Indianapolis *Sentinel* of February 23 had the following comment upon the convention, which certainly is partly justified by the results: "The masses were not represented. It was a cut and dried convention in which the servants came up to register the edicts of the masters."

Godlove S. Orth was nominated for Governor on the first ballot, receiving 1,125 votes when only 945 were necessary to a choice.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Orth was born and educated in Pennsylvania. He settled in Tippecanoe county in 1839. He served two terms in the State Senate, beginning in 1843, and was a captain in the Union army. He was a member of the Thirty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, Fortieth, Forty-first and Forty-third Congresses. At the time of his nomination he was at Vienna as United States minister. The other men balloted for against Mr. Orth were Judge James C. Denny, David C. Branham, of Jefferson county, Lieutenant-Governor Leonidas Sexton, and Albert G. Porter, of Marion county.

Robert S. Robertson, of Allen county, was nominated for Lieutenant-Governor without opposition. He was born and educated in New York, served in the Union army and moved to Indiana at the close of the War. He had been a zealous Republican from the beginning of that party and a persistent office seeker, though with poor success. In person he was tall and fine looking. In the nomi-

<sup>4</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, February 23, 1876.

nations for judges of the Supreme Court the same smooth precision prevailed as in the gubernatorial nominations. For the First district William P. Edson, of Posey county, born and educated in Indiana, and having served two terms as common pleas judge, was nominated. For the Second district A. C. Voris, of Lawrence county, a graduate of Hanover College and of the law department of Harvard, and a veteran of the Civil War, was nominated. For the Third district Judge Newcomb, of Indianapolis, was nominated. He was a leading lawyer of the city, having served repeatedly in both houses of the Legislature. For the Fourth district J. F. Kibbey, of Wayne county, was nominated. He was a native of Indiana, having been born and raised in Wayne county. He had served as attorney-general under Governor Morton and as judge of the Sixth judicial common pleas district from 1865 to 1873.

The remaining nominees were faithful party servants and selected without opposition, their biographies all having been written and ready for the same issue of the *Indianapolis Journal* with the announcement of their nominations (February 23, 1876): For Secretary of State, Isaac P. Watts, of Randolph county; for Auditor of State, William M. Hess, of Hendricks county; for Treasurer of State, George F. Herriott, of Johnson county; for Attorney-General, Jonathan W. Gordon, of Marion county; for Reporter of the Supreme Court, L. T. Miller, of Warren county; for Clerk of the Supreme Court, Charles Scholl, of Clark county; for Superintendent of Public Instruction, Oliver H. Smith, of Spencer county.

Following the convention things remained fairly quiet in political circles until May 10, when the campaign was formally opened with a rousing speech by the Hon. Jonathan W. Gordon in the Academy of Music at Indianapolis. Mr. Gordon attacked the Democratic party on their traditional anti-nationalism. He declared that it had always been against nationalism and had been the advocate of a loose federation of States. He pointed out the weakness and danger of such traditions and warned against them. He then laid open the war record of the Democratic party and displayed the "bloody shirt" in a manner characteristic of his temperament. He closed with an appeal for Republican support; even in spite of a few party mistakes or sins of individual Republicans he urged loyalty to the party as the only safe road.

The Democratic party in the State was in better condition, generally speaking, than was the Republican party. But as is usually the case with the party in power, the Republican machine was in

better working order than the Democratic machine, although the Democrats were more harmonious. The defeat of the latter in 1860 and their exile from power had taught them the value of unity in action. Then, too, they were on the aggressive side and had the recent Republican blunders with which to charge their opponents, while the Republicans had to go back nearly a generation to find mistakes with which to charge their opponents. Then the war record boast of the Republicans was rapidly losing its power. People were beginning to desire a change. The conditions in this respect resembled those of 1828. It did not take a prophetic eye to see that the Democrats were fighting a winning battle. Their leading organ was the Indianapolis *Sentinel*. In methods it was much the same as the Indianapolis *Journal*, which has already been described. It may fairly be assumed that it voiced the Western Democratic principles as well as any newspaper could have done.

On the money question the western Democrats in general stood for cheap money. Broadly speaking, they were the debtor class and desired cheap money with which to pay their debts. They were, therefore, squarely and uncompromisingly against the Resumption Act and for its immediate and unconditional repeal. They regarded it as a sure means of contraction of currency and they were anti-contractionists almost to the point of becoming straight-out inflationists. The Indianapolis *Sentinel*, January 3, remarked with disgust: "Contraction of the currency goes on to the oppression of the debtor and to the pleasure of the bondholder and money lender." Judging from the frequency with which the matter of resumption of specie payments is treated and from the tone of the comments there was no subject of more interest to the Democrats than the repeal of the Resumption Act. A *Sentinel* editorial, June 13, declared that the recent Republican losses were chiefly due to the unpopularity of the Resumption Act and to Orth's known friendliness toward the act. Another *Sentinel* editorial, February 19, is as follows: "There remains upon the statute books of the country a law that is doing positive injury to the business energy and enterprise of the country and crippling and paralyzing all kinds of business, . . . and its noxious influence now promises to bankrupt the country if not repealed. . . . It is needless to say that we refer to the Resumption Bill of Sherman adopted in January, 1875." This is but an example of the many attacks made upon the law. Governor Hendricks was the only prominent western Democrat to voice a policy of resumption under any guise and that was in a very weak and



indefinite manner. At different times he talked in very different ways on the subject. The *Indianapolis Journal* declared that he was considered a "hard money" man in the East and a "soft money" man in the West and that he was trying to cater to the support of both the eastern and western Democrats.

In regard to greenbacks and bank notes the Democrats were still more pronounced. The greenback answered their demand for cheap money in a very satisfactory manner, but they distrusted the National bank note. They seemed to understand that the two were in competition and that the life of the bank note would mean the sure death of the greenback. The *Indianapolis Sentinel*, February 23, in criticising the Republican State platform, said: "It leaves the bank note free to destroy the greenbacks, entailing twenty million dollars of interest that need not be paid." It seemed to be the opinion that since the bank notes were backed by Government bonds they would be a sounder currency and therefore drive out the greenbacks, a thing that is directly counter to the economic principle that the cheaper of two currencies will drive out the dearer. Then it seemed to be the opinion that since the Government was paying interest on the bonds securing the bank notes that the Government was reaping no returns from the use of the money and hence a sheer waste of the interest paid. The fallacy of this reasoning is certainly apparent.

The Hon. Frank Landers, one of the Democratic aspirants for Governor, in January, 1876, said in a speech at Greencastle that the land of the farmer was pledged to the payment of the bank notes and that for this obligation they had not a cent of advantage to show. It is difficult to say with certainty whether with Mr. Landers was ignorant of the situation or whether he was working on the supposed ignorance of his hearers. It is clear enough why the western Democrats should have opposed resumption, but it is not so clear why they should have opposed the bank notes, unless it was that they were ignorant of the real nature of the notes and of economic laws. Their one thought seemed to be to get a currency that would entail the least possible expense to the Government. An editorial in the *Indianapolis Sentinel*, February 24, denounced the Republican law providing for the replacing of fractional currency with silver coin on the ground that it would cost money to buy the bullion to make the coin.

As to a money basis the Democratic plan seems vague. Since it was cheap money that they desired a very definite basis was not

necessary. Landers took the position that when the Government stamped a piece of paper declaring it to be legal tender that was all the basis it required, and that seems to have been the most generally accepted theory among western Democrats. In the East, of course, it was different, but in Indiana at this time ideas of money were generally defective. People as a rule had a high opinion of the National Government and were loyal to it and thought that its simple touch was sufficient to change paper into money that would circulate at par without any further backing. The methods resorted to, as it has been pointed out, were coarse and abusive and not well adapted to the winning of followers. It was a fault of the times.

The relation between the Democratic party and the Independent Greenback party was rather intimate. The Indianapolis *Journal* complained of this and bewailed the fact that the Greenbackers were chiefly from the Republican ranks. A *Sentinel* editorial, June 13, declared that the weakness of the Republicans was mainly due to desertions to the Greenbackers and to the unpopularity of the Resumption Act and to the friendliness of Mr. Orth to the act. Then, too, their friendship was shown in the fact that the Greenbackers nominated Frank Landers, a prominent Democrat, as their candidate for Governor. In the political speeches they criticised each other very little. Their platforms were much alike and in fact there was not enough important difference to justify their forming two separate parties.

The Democratic party in Indiana at this time was brim full of what may be termed the western pioneer democratic spirit. It was inclined to lionize the common every-day man that was not too highly educated and who bore the marks of toil.<sup>5</sup> They were inclined to suspect men who wore kid gloves and spoke correct English. They were inclined to doubt whether he could have anything in common with their ideals and interests.

On April 19 the Democratic State Convention met at Indianapolis. There was less evidence of machine rule than was seen at the Republican Convention in February before. However, the Democratic meeting was more inclined toward disorder. Thomas R. Cobb, of Vincennes, was elected president of the convention and John W. Kern, of Kokomo, was elected secretary. The president announced that he would make no address and proceeded directly to the work

<sup>5</sup> Indianapolis *Sentinel*, September 1, 1876: "Fifteen thousand people meet *Uncle Jimmy* (Williams) at Wheatland. Our farmer candidate meets the people familiarly in the groves of his own town."

of the convention. Amid tumult that was well-nigh distracting the names W. S. Holman, Franklin Landers, J. D. Williams and Daniel Voorhees were placed before the convention for gubernatorial nomination. The tumult became so overwhelming that the president called for the reading of the platform in hopes that it would restore order. It did restore a degree of order, but it did not last after the work of nomination was resumed. The Convention from beginning to end was characterized by excessive tumult.

There was a sharp controversy between Franklin Landers and the people backing Mr. Holman. Mr. Landers played the part of a demagogue, but without success. The wrangling between the Landers-Holman factions resulted in the carrying of a motion just before the announcement of the result of the second ballot to make the nomination of James D. Williams unanimous.

Mr. Williams was born in Ohio in 1808, but came to Knox county, Indiana, with his parents while yet a mere boy. He was reared on the farm and accustomed to the knocks of a frontier life. He was certainly an honest man, though what many people would term a close dealer, even approaching the miserly. He served, in all, twenty-nine years in the Legislature and twelve years on the State Board of Agriculture, and was one of the wealthiest land owners in Indiana. He would wear nothing but home-grown, home-spun, home-woven and home-made clothes. The *Indianapolis Sentinel*, April 20, 1876, attributed this conduct to his loyalty to home products, but his less sympathetic observers attributed it to his love of the dollar and to the deep anguish that came to him on seeing a dollar leave his clutches. He had been elected to Congress in 1874 by a majority of over 7,000 and during his stay there was an advocate of the same rigid economy that characterized his private dealings. In personal appearance he was extremely homely. The *Indianapolis Journal*, September 7, 1876, has the following pen picture of Mr. Williams. Of course it is not from a sympathetic source, but has some historical as well as literary value: "He is a difficult man to describe. Abraham Lincoln was an Admiral Crichton in comparison and Richard Smith would be like an Apollo Belvidere along side of him. The English language would never recover from the shock of a detailed and accurate description of his general appearance and it would take Uncle John Robinson in his most energetic and capable moments to properly emphasize his political points and peculiarities. He is as handsome as a black india-rubber baby drawn out to its greatest possible length and its face pinched out of shape. His

head, in shape, is of the sugar-loaf order and is covered with a short stubby growth of bristling iron grey hair. His only whiskers is a little bunch of the same description of hair grown upon his "Adam's Apple" and sticking out between the hard yellow starched ends of his cotton sideboards, that serve on either side of his head to support the heavy dewlap of his enormous ears. His eyes are small and closely set against the high narrow bridge of his long sharp inquisitive nose. His mouth looks as if it had been put on warm and ran all over the lower part of his face before it got set and it opens like the opening of navigation in spring. Looking him full in the face gives one the idea of a narrow, loaded hay barge with broadside sails set, coming down stream with the front cabin doors wide open. His long lean legs part with each other in disgust at the hips and pursue separate and diverging paths to the knees, when negotiations for reconciliation are entered into, which takes place finally at the ends of the toes of two great feet which join each other lovingly while the heels still remain estranged and keep as far away from each other as possible."

Col. Isaac P. Gray, of Randolph county, was nominated for Lieutenant-Governor. Mr. Gray was born in Pennsylvania. He moved to Indiana in 1855 and opened a law office in Union City. He served with distinction in the Civil war and was in the State Senate from 1868 to 1872. For Secretary of State John Enos Neff, of Randolph county, was nominated. He was the youngest man on the ticket by several years, being yet under thirty years of age. He had studied at Indiana University and immediately took up the practice of law. He was an exceptionally gifted young man. Ebenezer Henderson, the successful candidate for the nomination for Auditor of State, was a shrewd political manipulator and a man of great wealth. He was nominated to succeed himself. The remaining nominees were all rather commonplace politicians and not of special prominence. They were as follows:

For Treasurer of State, Benjamin C. Shaw, a carriage maker, of Indianapolis; for Attorney-General, Clarence A. Buskirk, of Princeton; for State Superintendent of Public Instruction, James H. Smart, of Fort Wayne; for Clerk of the Supreme Court, Gabriel Schmuck, of Perry county; for Reporter of the Supreme Court, A. N. Martin, of Wells county; for Judges of the Supreme Court—First district, S. H. Buskirk, of Bloomington; Second district, A. C. Downey, of Ohio county; Third district, John Pettit, of Tippecanoe county; Fourth district, James L. Worden, of Allen county.

The platform adopted by the Convention declared in favor of war against political corruption and advocated investigations as a good means of uprooting the trouble. It also laid heavy stress on the need of economy in public matters and decried the wasteful extravagance of the Republican administration then in power. It also advocated a gold and silver monetary basis as the ultimate goal in view and declared for the gradual retirement of bank notes and the substitution of Government paper in their stead. No more bank notes were to be issued and those in circulation finally extinguished. It demanded the speedy and unconditional repeal of the Resumption Act, the increase in prosperity and wealth to determine the time of resumption. They seemed to hesitate in demanding a "soft money" basis or non-resumption, though they feign would have had it so, but would rather accomplish the same results by keeping it eternally as a future rather than a present policy. It declared for State support of the common schools and for a licensing of the liquor traffic; for providing for the soldier and his dependents; it declared against juries for Federal courts in civil cases; for prohibiting United States officials from contributing to campaign funds; against the payment of the Confederate debt; and for local improvements at National expense. It ended by endorsing Thomas A. Hendricks as a candidate for the Presidential nomination and instructing the delegates to the Democratic National Convention accordingly.

The Independent Greenback party held its convention in the Academy of Music at Indianapolis on February 16, 1876. Only about half the counties were represented and there was a conspicuous lack of leading men. The Hon. Anson Wolcott, of White county, was elected permanent chairman. He made a short address before the convention, in which he declared for greenbacks as a desirable circulating medium because they would not leave the country.

Hugh Marlin, of Monroe county, introduced a resolution against nominating any one for any office on the ticket who would not entirely cut loose from both of the old parties. He was called out of order by A. Johnson, of Montgomery county, and his motion failed. He yielded, however, with a determination to be heard again later on, and on the same subject.

In their platform they declared for the unconditional repeal of the Resumption Act, for the undiminished maintenance of the school fund, for the refunding of the National debt at 3.65%, for the

reservation of the public domain for homeseekers, except 160 acres apiece to the soldiers, and for a strict policy of public economy.

The convention then proceeded to the nomination of the following candidates: For Governor, Franklin Landers; for Lieutenant-Governor, Anson Wolcott, of White county; for Secretary of State, Leroy Templeton, of Benton county; for Auditor of State, Morris N. Bundy, of Henry county; for Attorney-General, W. A. Tipton, of Fountain county; for Superintendent of Public Instruction, Rev. R. S. Blount, of Greene county; for Clerk of the Supreme Court, W. W. Conner, of Hamilton county; for Supreme Court Judges—First district, William F. Parrott, of Vanderburg county; Second district, H. C. Newcomb, of Marion county; Third district, John D. Haines, of Dearborn county; Fourth district, R. Lindsay, of Howard county.

On the mention of the name of Col. B. C. Shaw for Treasurer of State Mr. Marlin, of Monroe county, rose again to his feet. He came out in thundering tones against the nomination of any man who was not free from the old parties, men who were willing to return to slavery for the flesh-pots and manna, or to fall down and worship the golden calf. Just how much influence Mr. Marlin had cannot be determined, but Mr. Shaw was not the nominee.

When Alex. M. Gow, of Vanderburg county, was nominated for Superintendent of Public Instruction as a representative of educational thought and progress, one Mr. Geisendorf objected strenuously to him upon the ground that what the children needed was to be taught the greenback theory of money and not educational thought or progress.

On February 24, 1876, a convention was called in Indianapolis with a view of forming a "Workingmen's Party." It was largely attended, but the representation was not general. After the election of officers they proceeded first to a declaration of the conditions that made the organization of a workingmen's party necessary. They declared<sup>6</sup> that there was legislation favoring the classes and oppressing the workingman and that the workingman was not really represented in Congress, or the State Legislature at all and that relief by either the Democrats or Republicans was hopeless. They demanded representation from their own ranks and advocated personal aggressiveness in obtaining it.

They then proceeded with a declaration of principles, declaring that it was the duty of every man to be active in politics and that

<sup>6</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, February 25, 1876.

the Government should work to secure the greatest good for the greatest number of its citizens. It was their expressed opinion that the working classes were the corner stones upon which the superstructure of society and government rested, that they should receive attention commensurate with their importance, and that these things could not be until all classes of industrial workers were represented in all legislative bodies by men of their own ranks. It was also their opinion that capital gained for the capitalist certain vantage-points against which the workingman was helpless to compete and against which he had no protection. They, therefore, advocated that the laborer should be legally secured against the invasions of capital, or in other words, they demanded discrimination in favor of workingmen. This, at that time, was generally regarded as fanatical, and was counter to our old notion of equal rights for all and special privileges for none. Yet it is a principle now endorsed by both the Democrat and Republican progressives and also endorsed in Mr. Croly's book, *The Promise of American Life*. They also declared that all property, including Government securities, and all incomes above \$1,200 should be taxed, the rate to increase with the increase of the income. They declared wages should be secured by first lien on what it produces, that the entire property of bankers should secure all deposits. They declared for the withdrawal of bank notes and the substitution of greenbacks and the ultimate resumption of specie payment. The State and National debt should be refunded at a maximum interest of 3% and officials should be paid on a basis of services rendered and not a flat salary. The Vagabond Law was vigorously assailed and denounced and the subsidizing of railroads by land grants was bitterly denounced, together with the Credit Mobilier. They ended up by denouncing the practice of the Spoils System and declaring in favor of woman suffrage. The convention adjourned before completing the organization of the new party and the enthusiasm waned until the work was never finished. The *Indianapolis Journal*, March 13, 1876, declared that the agitation among the workingmen was incited and led by pretenders who were not of the ranks of the workingmen at all, but were agitating them for personal reasons. There was likely some truth in the statement.

There was no other meeting until April 12, when one was called at the Statehouse. It was addressed by Enos B. Reed and William Dreythaler. The spirit and enthusiasm had perceptibly cooled since

the meeting of February 24 and it was clear that nothing decisive would be undertaken.

The Socialists were not a very great deal in evidence nor yet were they wholly missing.<sup>7</sup> May 2, 1876, Peter J. McGuire, of New Haven, Conn., addressed a Socialist meeting in Indianapolis. He spoke against the wrongs of the workingman, of which low wages was the chief, and especially about the concentration of wealth in the hands of Thomas Scott and William Orton. Every wrong which the workingmen were suffering was due, in his estimation, to deliberate planning toward criminal ends by the officers of the State. Of course he did not neglect their cardinal doctrine of common ownership.

As has been said, the campaign proper was opened May 10 with the Republicans on the defensive side. It was plain from the first that the issues of the campaign were all going to be included in the one word "reform." The Indianapolis *Sentinel*, September 4, contained the following in bold headlines: "*Reform, the Issue of the Day.* Grant, Morton, Hayes, corruption, crime, outrage and the bloody shirt; Tilden, Hendricks, reform, honesty, patriotism, and pure government." Then followed a speech of the Hon. Joseph Pulitzer, delivered at Mozart Hall, Indianapolis, on the previous evening. It was from beginning to end a condemnation of the corruption of the Grant administration and a justification of the Democratic demands. It was typical both in spirit and subject-matter of the average Democratic speech throughout the campaign. On October 12, following the announcement of the results of the State election, the Indianapolis *Sentinel* came out with the following: "Reform and reconciliation the keynote of Indiana's greeting to the sisterhood of States. A rebuke to Sitting Bull (Morton) and his satellites. The radical ring repudiated and reform guaranteed." The three lines of reform most agitated were reform against corruption in office, reform in attitude toward and treatment of the South, and reform in regard to money standards. Of the latter considerable has already been said in connection with the platform adopted by the Democratic State Convention. Very briefly stated, they stood for the immediate repeal of the Resumption Act, the retirement of bank notes, the fostering of greenbacks and in a very weak, half-hearted, and indefinite manner they stood for the ultimate resumption of specie payment. The strong note in the money issue was postponement of resumption. In their demands relative

<sup>7</sup> Indianapolis *Sentinel*, May 2, 1876.



to the South they demanded the speedy withdrawal of all United States forces from Southern soil and the leaving of local government of the South in the hands of the South, and also advocated an active policy of reconciliation of the South by conceding them all rights not inimical to the fruits of victory of the Northern arms. Of the issue of reform against corruption in office they had more to say than of any other and it was the hardest for the Republicans to fight. The *Indianapolis Journal*, April 14, replied as follows to this cry of corruption in office: "Nothing is at once more illogical and false and wicked than the current wholesale denunciations of the Republican party as a mass of infamy and corruption, and the men who deliberately write these things are wilful falsifiers who hope by groundless accusations against the dominant party to overthrow it. The Republican party, as to its constituency, embraces almost the entire mass of the Protestant clergy in the northern part of the United States and every man knows that as men they are among our most intelligent and high-principled citizens. A very large proportion of the men who constitute the rank and file of what is known as the Protestant Christian element of society; an immense majority of the educators; by far the largest part of those who support and manage our public and private charities belong to the same party. Some dozen, more or less, Government officers have been detected by the Government itself in fraudulent dealing and have been imprisoned or otherwise punished and this is all, absolutely all. But upon this foundation an unscrupulous Democratic press proceeds to erect accusations as broad as the Republican party and as high as Heaven and demands that an outraged people shall rise in wrath and hurl this limitless mass of infamy to the ground. The Republican party has hunted down and punished its own offenders. It inaugurated that war against corruptionists. If it has the odium of corruption upon a few men in its ranks, it has the honor of universal denunciation of it and of having done its utmost to purge itself of the taint. As a whole, the Republican party is the only untainted party. The other smells of treason, rebellion and secession."

The tactics resorted to were much the same as those in vogue in the State today, with the addition of the torchlight processions and more extensive use of scandalous and slanderous abuse of the political opponents both in the newspapers and in the public address. People seemed to take politics vastly more seriously then than they do at present. I have the word of older men to the effect that fist and skull fights were often the result of political differences and

that neighbors would often refuse to recognize neighbors because of differences in political views. The general spirit was one of bitterness directed more by prejudice and passion than by intellect. The common inclination was to consider the opponent not only in the wrong, but wilfully so, because he desired to bring disaster upon his fellow men and upon his country. Of course there were many intelligent people, but they were usually the ones least heard from; so being governed by what was spoken and written, the spirit described above was the prevailing one.

Mr. Orth, the Republican candidate for Governor, returned from Vienna to conduct his own campaign. He was given a rousing reception on his return, May 26, and after spending a few days getting a line on the situation he opened his campaign with an address at Greencastle, July 8. It was typical of the addresses in general. He first reviewed the records of the Republicans, painting them a little lower than the angels, and then the record of the Democrats (chiefly their war record) and showed them up only a little higher than the demons. He then dealt with their loud howl for reform, stating that it was the Democrats and not the Republicans that had brought on the disorder and lawlessness and that it was the Republicans who had brought to light and punished the offenders. He took up the causes of the panic and again turned the blame on the Democrats; he defended the financial policy of the Republicans, advocating the earliest possible resumption of specie payment; depicted the mission of the Republican party and considered the exceptional fitness of the Republican candidates for carrying out that mission, ending up with the only logical conclusion (granting the premises) that every loyal American citizen should vote the Republican ticket.

The Republican National Convention met at Cincinnati the middle of June and here again results hinged on Indiana. After losing hope of placing Oliver P. Morton in nomination it was the swinging of the Indiana delegation to Governor Hayes, of Ohio, that placed him in nomination on the seventh ballot. The platform adopted by the Convention was very displeasing to the Democrats of Indiana. It was too indefinite on the points opposed most strongly by the Democrats. In the first place the Democrats insisted that the Republicans had stolen much of their (Democrats) thunder and that they (Republicans) were half-hearted in advocating their own doctrine. For example, the Republican platform and the platform adopted later by the Democratic convention at St. Louis were alike

in that both advocated pacification of the South; both denounced corruption in office; both were against higher education at State expense; both denounced further land grants to corporations; and both advocated restriction of Mongolian immigration to the United States. Besides these points that were practically identical in the two platforms the Republican plank on resumption of specie payment was very indefinite. So far as the wording was concerned it was impossible to tell whether they meant to stand by the Resumption Act or whether they meant to cater to the western Republican idea on the subject. There was really no very striking difference between the two platforms. The Indianapolis *Sentinel*, February 24, declared that the Republican State platform was a straddling affair designed to draw back the departing party members from the Independent Greenback party. This same thing was true of the National Republican platform with the added tendency to straddle on the currency question so as to please both the eastern and the western Republicans.

The nomination by the Democrats at St. Louis of Samuel J. Tilden for President was a victory for the eastern Democrats, who stood definitely in favor of resumption, and lessened, still further, the difference between the Republicans and Democrats on the currency question. The Indianapolis *Sentinel*, June 29, following the announcement of the results at the St. Louis Convention, said: "The die is cast; it is a hard-money victory all around. Tilden nominated on the second ballot. Square hard-money platform. Attempt to force the second place on Hendricks." It is putting the truth mildly to say that the Democrats of Indiana were disappointed by the nomination of Tilden and in a time when party ties were less strong and party success less desirable, it might easily have caused a split in the Democratic party. In a meeting of the Democrats of the Ninth district, held at Frankfort, July 11, there was manifest a strong spirit of discontent at the work of the St. Louis Convention. They repudiated the financial plank of the platform and declared for greenbacks. There was a strong attempt to nominate Leroy Templeton, an avowed independent Greenbacker, for Congress. This failed, however, and George McWilliams, a loyal Democrat of Fountain county, was nominated on the fourth ballot.

After a short and vigorous canvass Mr. Orth tendered his resignation as candidate for Governor, on August 2, and the same day there was a call for a meeting of the State Central Committee to meet in Indianapolis to consider the resignation. Mr. Orth gave as

his reasons for resigning that he was not receiving the united support of the Republican party. An editorial in the *Indianapolis Journal*, August 3, 1876, stated that the dissatisfaction was due to his alleged relations to the Venezuelan claims, a position in which it asserted that he was able to show himself innocent.

On August 4 General Benjamin Harrison was chosen to take the place of Mr. Orth and the campaign went on with comparatively little interruption. General Harrison opened his campaign with a speech at Danville August 18. He was a more polished gentleman than the average politician of this campaign and his speeches are more tempered and freer from scathing criticisms. In spite of all this his speeches sound rather strong in tone today. In his Danville speech he declared that the Democratic party had merited death by their relation to the Rebellion. He denounced Tilden as a secessionist and criticised his conduct in the Chicago meeting in demanding a cessation of hostilities. He accused Tilden of being in concerted action with Boss Tweed and of being responsible for the Credit Mobilier. He ended by an earnest appeal for concerted action. From this time on to the end of the campaign Mr. Harrison was very active, working to the limit of his strength.

The campaign was very aggressive on all sides. The *Indianapolis Journal*, August 8, contained a schedule of over five hundred speeches to be delivered by forty-six different speakers, all to be done within about ten days. As has been said, they relied chiefly on abusing opponents. The following headlines from the *Indianapolis Journal*, August 9, are illustrative of this: "Samuel J. Tilden, the career of a notorious sham reformer, colossal fraud of the age, a swindler of railroads, a friend and companion of Boss Tweed, the arch conspirator of New York politics."

Senator Morton delivered a typical "bloody shirt" address before a large audience at the Indianapolis Academy of Music July 11. The *Indianapolis Journal* commented upon it as follows: "It was a powerful arraignment of the Democratic party and a merciless exposition of the *shams* and *frauds*, the *follies* and the *crimes* that have marked its history." Such was the general nature of the public addresses and the printed attacks of the campaign. Between the *Journal* and the *Sentinel* it was tit for tat. They seemed about equally adept in the use of scathing English and in power of concocting slanderous stories, the one against the other.

After Harrison became the candidate for Governor there was a strong endeavor to revive the spirit of the campaign of 1840. There

was a monster Republican meeting at Battle Ground, September 26, and the program was planned to revive the scenes of the former Harrison campaign. The plan was practically a failure, for it was a plain fact that the grandson of the log-cabin candidate was not a representative of log-cabin life. The Harrisons, it was charged, had moved over to the aristocratic side and the log-cabin standards were now being borne by the Democrats. The triumph in the State election was a triumph of the same western Democratic ideals that triumphed in 1840. As the campaign drew to its close the Democrats became more confident of victory and it is probable that the Republicans became more fearful than they were willing to admit. Harrison closed his campaign with a speech at Lebanon October 9.

The leading issue of the Greenbackers was their policy of bonds interconvertible into greenbacks or vice versa, their policy of greenbacks interconvertible into interest-bearing bonds. That is to say if a man had more greenbacks than he could invest to a good advantage, he could, on his own demand, exchange them for their face value in interest-bearing bonds and all such bonds were likewise convertible on demand at par into greenbacks. It was perhaps the best cheap money scheme ever devised. It won the respect of many people, both of the Democratic and Republican parties, and among these was State Senator Newton Booth, of Terre Haute.

The Greenback meetings were generally well attended and marked by strong and genuine enthusiasm. Their showing in the election was certainly not representative of their real power. Many that sympathized with them certainly voted with one or the other of the old parties through fear of losing their votes if they cast them with the Greenbackers.

The State election came on October 10 and the Indianapolis *Journal*, October 12, contained the following: "Results leave the Republicans abundant room for rejoicing. Vote on Governor is close and victory claimed by both sides." The Indianapolis *Sentinel* of the same date said: "William walks over the political grave of the grandson. Blue Jeans vs. Kid Gloves. The State ticket elected. The fates decree it and the fated admit it." October 13 the Indianapolis *Journal* said: "Official returns from eighty-four counties. The Democratic ticket elected by about 4,000 majority. They won by fraud."

The final results showed the following composition for the Legislature:

Republican Senators holding over.....	8
Republican Senators elected.....	15
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Total .....	23
Democratic Senators holding over.....	14
Democratic Senators elected.....	11
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Total .....	25
Republican Representatives .....	53
Democratic Representatives .....	44
Independent Senators .....	2
Independent Representatives .....	2
Total Republican vote on joint ballot.....	76
Total Democratic and Independent vote on joint ballot..	73
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Joint Republican majority.....	3

After the State election the campaign dragged on to November. The Republicans still talked of victory for Hayes, but it was certainly in a rather half-hearted manner. Harrison, following his defeat, went ahead in the National campaign and won Nation-wide recognition. His oratorical powers, together with his moderation and clear thinking, won him high National esteem and paved the way toward what happened in 1888.

The National election came on November 7 and the Indianapolis *Journal*, November 8, conceded the election of Tilden. The Indianapolis *Sentinel* of the same date contained the following: "At last after many years of gloom there is the dawn of a better day. Reform and reconciliation guaranteed to a long distracted country by the election of Tilden and Hendricks. The day of redemption. New York *Tribune*, *Sun*, *Herald* and *World* all concede the election. The man of destiny will now proceed to administer upon the estate of defunct radicalism. The solid South, New York, New Jersey, Indiana and Connecticut settle the case." An editorial of the same issue came out in tones of emotion as follows: "Never since the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy has there been an occasion which called forth grander rejoicings. The triumph of yesterday was sublime. Forty millions of people by their silent potentiality of the ballot triumphed. Man's capacity for self-government was vindicated—Grantism is crushed—a mighty people are free—a united country is assured. No more

bayonet rule. No more thieves in office. No more bribe-taking in the White House. No more impeachments of cabinet officers. A new era dawns upon the country. The night of oppression is gone forever. Henceforth fraternity. The country from rock-ribbed New England to where the Oregon pours its mighty flood, from the lakes to the sunny South is one, united, one flag, and one destiny. Wars and rumors of wars shall cease and all sections of our mighty empire shall vie with each other in carrying forward the conquests of good government. . . . If the angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, all heaven will be jubilant over a mighty people redeemed from the grasp of oppressors and thieves . . . .” In answer to all this the *Indianapolis Journal* remarked the following day that the Democratic rooster had thrown up a “premature dish of Tilden and Hendricks hog-wash.”

Indiana had plainly declared for the Democrats, and it was evident that before the Republican party could hope to again win the electoral votes of that State it must change its policy toward the South, and show itself earnestly in favor of civil service reform and of clean men for civil officials.